

State Commission

Serve Delaware, the Governor's Commission on Community and Volunteer Service, currently manages a portfolio of six AmeriCorps programs, five formula grants and one competitive grant. During the 2014-2015 program year in Delaware, 113 AmeriCorps members participated in CNCS funded programs and 2,351 individuals and families were directly served in the areas of economic opportunity, education, job readiness, transitional and affordable housing, substance abuse prevention, and veterans' services. Although Delaware is a small state with a population of less than one million, the impact of volunteerism is large. The Commission supports an annual statewide volunteerism conference and the Governor sponsors two events honoring volunteers.

AmeriCorps VISTA

To educate the future workforce in Delaware and close the skills-education gap, the Delaware Economic Development Office has partnered with state agencies and nonprofits to support the launch of the Success Pathways and Roads to Careers (SPARC) program. Currently being piloted in seven schools, the web-based SPARC program enables students to explore post-secondary options and engage with professionals in those fields. An AmeriCorps VISTA member played a critical role in recruiting and training volunteers and businesses to participate in the online platform and provide opportunities for job shadowing and career fairs. More than 90 businesses and 200 volunteers are participating. The SPARC program reached 1,750 student participants by June 2015, with the goal of a statewide rollout to all students in the 2015-16 school year.

The mentoring and technology center at Kingswood Community Center opened its doors in January 2015 to help close the digital divide and enable youth in northeast Wilmington to achieve their full potential. Developed in partnership with the Mike Clark Legacy Foundation, the center is modeled after the Skills Center at Fraim Boys & Girls Club. Both projects have the support of AmeriCorps VISTA members playing a key role in renovation, partnerships and outreach, and program development. The newly renovated space serves as the home base for the KCC Mentoring and Technology Education Program, which utilizes a team mentoring approach where one mentor serves four students ages 10-17. The mentoring program will serve 12 youth in its inaugural year. The center offers additional activities and workshops to youth including STEM training, financial literacy, self-management and the arts.

AmeriCorps NCCC

An AmeriCorps NCCC team partnered with the Sussex County Habitat for Humanity (SCHFH) in Georgetown to complete home repairs for individuals living in owner-occupied substandard housing. The team helped build and work on houses at various levels of completion. The team worked with three families who will receive homes from SCHFH, and helped work on homes for several other families. AmeriCorps members helped build a shed, weatherize three homes, and paint trim, walls, and doors. Members installed electrical wiring, windows, blinds and doors. Members also completed roofing, channeling, and siding. Lastly, members removed debris from the work sites and helped supervise and coordinate 70 volunteers from three different volunteer groups. The team also worked with the local Boys and Girls Club in Georgetown.

In partnership with Delaware State Parks in Dover, two AmeriCorps NCCC teams assisted the program with trail maintenance, natural areas projects, and building and maintaining new and existing features. The mission of the program is to provide Delaware residents and visitors with safe and enjoyable recreational opportunities and open spaces, responsible stewardship of the lands and cultural and natural resources, and resource-based interpretive and educational services. One team cleared trails of invasive species and trash, built and maintained equipment, shoveled mulch around trees and flower beds, and removed snow markers at North Inlet Campground at the Seashore and Bellevue State Park. The other team provided service at the Brandywine Zoo, White Clay Creek State Park, and Trap and Killens Ponds. Members shoveled snow and ice at the Zoo and dug trenches in the pygmy goat habitat. At the state park, the team put together benches and removed old fences and barbed wire. At Trap Pond, the team removed logs and fallen branches from a tent campsite loop. At Killens Pond, members mulched garden beds, completed trail maintenance and cleaned up trash at Fork Branch.

Senior Corps Foster Grandparent Program

For students who have fallen behind, the 239 Foster Grandparents sponsored by the Delaware State Office on Volunteerism represent an opportunity to close the gap academically and improve their social and emotional development. From July 2013 to June 2014, Foster Grandparents served more than 200,000 hours in elementary and pre-schools across the state, providing tutoring and mentoring to 1,434 children and youth. The average Foster Grandparent serves 20-30 hours per week, focusing on children 12 and under in need of educational support. The program continues to respond to new community needs, recently beginning to provide FGP services at language immersion schools, where half of the instruction is taught in English and the other half in Spanish. The Foster Grandparents serving at these language immersion schools are bilingual, helping students to become proficient in both languages.

Senior Corps RSVP

The Hope Medical Clinic is the state's only 100 percent free medical facility, offering non-emergency primary medical and dental care services to uninsured, non-Medicaid individuals ages 18-65. Comprised entirely of volunteers, the staff includes internists, surgeons, family practice physicians, dentists, nurses and additional medical and office support staff. For the more than 3,200 patients, the clinic has offered access to medical treatment that was once out of reach. The total value of the free medical services provided is more than \$500,000. From July 2013 to June 2014, 22 RSVP volunteers contributed 1,614 hours of service to the clinic as leadership, medical and support staff. The Hope Medical Clinic was founded and has continued to expand with the support of the Modern Maturity Center, adding additional services to meet the needs of uninsured citizens.

Senior Corps Senior Companion Program

With respite care costs increasing, in-home care services are out of reach for much of the state's senior population. A report on the state of respite care in Delaware indicated that 53 percent of those seniors surveyed could not afford the cost of respite care, forcing many to stay alone or rely on family for care. The First State Community Action Agency's Senior Companion Program focuses on those most vulnerable, the low-income frail and elderly that would not otherwise be able to access respite services. From July 2013 to June 2014, 12 Senior Companions provided respite care services four hours per day, five days per week. Thirteen low-income families received services, resulting in cost savings of over \$300,000. First State Community Action Agency has proudly sponsored the Senior Companion Program for over 30 years.